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The ups-and-downs of Larry Kent's "High"

Larry Kent's film "High" opened last week at the Guy Theatre, corner of Guy and Maisonneuve. Klaus Fuchs went to see the film and later interviewed Kent.

News - What relevance does this film have for you in terms of having made another film since...

Kent - It's a very difficult thing to say. It's along time ago and I am still involved with the film I just finished. But it is very nostalgic to come back to it. Considering everything I am pretty pleased with it though I consider that film a passed experience and am finished with it.

News - The film seemed to be constructed out of a series of situations rather than a character development of the boy and the girl. Did you intend this construction and why.

Kent - I don't think they're going through a routine. I consider the film as a mosaic. The two characters are drifting from one experience to another. Their world is one of drifting and existing. They do not rebel against a society - but are acting lawlessly because that seems to be the natural way for them to behave in a society that has alienated not only them but also they, themselves in their sexual behavior.

Kids at university have maybe four hours of class a day and after that no responsibilities if they at all realize why they are there in the 1st place. For the two of them, the boy and girl, it's a kind of aimless, nonfulfilling existence

as they are coning their way through school. There is really no alternative for them and they become schizophrenic as they jump from one environment to another - one in which they try to fulfill society's demands and the other where they try to fulfill their own needs which though ironically have been created by the environment of the society. Thus they begin to impinge upon society and the people they meet.

News - The murder seemed accidental rather than a preconceived objective.

Kent - Well this works in again what I was saying before. The attitude of the boy is that of an anarchist. He teaches the girl a way of life though he is very subtle as he rolls drunks and homosexuals. The girl on the other hand is less even tempered and once she has learned that she does not have to depend on the boy she runs the show. As soon as the boy impinges upon her new found freedom she leaves and when the man who takes her to the Laurentians arouses her anger and tries to rule her she kills him. There is a character which reacts without reflection because that would imply a set of values that have no relevance for them.

News - What about the use of color black and white?

Kent - The film has a mosaic form rather than a linear one. The story happens - there are no assumptions

made which say that the picture must be black and white or totally color. For instance the use of the color filters was meant to create a kind of disbelief a non-reality. As an example - when the boy and the girl begin to smoke pot we lose any pictorial definition of the characters but instead become involved in the trip or after the murder when the couple make love in the field. The color of the field is an unreal, plastic green, denoting the absurdity of the situation.

News - The take over by the girl at the end was this the natural thing to happen?

Kent - Yes, I definitely think so. The boy is a non violent, intellectual anarchist. His idea is to take whatever he needs - But he takes it in a cunning way. The girl on the other hand is less subtle, almost gross. She is the epitome of modern femininity. She wants to destroy to prove her emancipation and becomes almost masculine in her desires. When she gets her freedom she castrates the boy in that he is not able to make it with anybody else.

News - This film has been commented upon as being a reflection of "the establishment".

Kent - No, hardly - This film has nothing to do with the establishment other than that the two characters of the film seem to be a product of a North American Society which to me seems to be literally without direction.



The Weekly Supplement of the Loyola News

Staff: Dr. D. Porter, Bob Calderisi, John Meuris, Elly Alboim, Lee Firth, and the entire Drama society just for being there.

For those of you who have missed it for the last two times, Sue Szuba did it ... and Elliott McLoughlin was taking pictures ... just beware of the knife of the noble burman ... and she might get in ... him too. This may be a Catholic college ... but we still have a tendency to lay board members. Spiro T. Agnew is still wearing white socks ... still exists too ... oops, I let it out: yes Spiro T. Agnew does exist ... not bad for a guy who is supposed to be the Vice President of something. No the cat is not gone ... just look for the pussy in the A.I.S.E.C. office ... don't listen to Burman ... he is just a frustrated athlete ... in his private moments he rips up copies of Logos ... for the rabbit was ill but has returned to the pocket... (S.P.D.B.) ... so he said to his mother ... with a name like Spiro I could conquer the world ... but don't hold me to it ... I might open my mouth in the meantime ... but the rabbit didn't like the pocket ... (S.P.D.B.) ... and an M.T.O. to you too ...

Wither the P.C.'S?

Only a year ago, it seemed scarcely possible that the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada would require a rigorous re-examination of its role. Under the new leadership of Robert Stanfield, and after a highly successful national leadership convention, the party seemed destined to triumph in the election that was just around the corner. There was much expectation of vast new support from Quebec and the Maritimes - indeed, from the average Canadian voter generally. 1968 looked like a year of opportunity.

Then came the Liberal convention and the national election. In the face of Pierre Elliot Trudeau's arrogant refusal to commit his party to any sort of ideology or policy program (beyond meaninglessly vague calls for a "just society"), the Conservatives could only murmur about higher welfare payments and government action to combat regional disparity. While Stanfield went about promising pie-in-the-sky to the Maritime voter, the Liberals kept quiet and helped the election campaign degenerate into a personality contest. Only the NDP appeared willing to offer the national electorate a reasonably consistent platform of proposed legislation. Never in recent history has such an unintelligent campaign been waged before the Canadian people. The result: we now have a government which is committed to little and is willing to do less (except to draft Canadian youths). Meanwhile, the Conservative party is out to lunch.

What sort of political philosophy does the Progressive Conservative party offer the voter? What would it do, undo, or not do if it were voted into power? How would it deal with the continuing growth of government power which most right-wing voters abhor? What is the party's position on the political spectrum? What positions will it take in order to win the next election?

Few prominent Tories would venture to give any kind of specific answer to these questions. The party has made a deliberate attempt to appear "middle of the road", thereby disillusioning many right-wingers without gaining a significant number of "moderates". The PC's have become the party of the Maritimes and the Prairies, its whole appearance having a distinctly rural air about it. In fact, to many Canadians the party has become a glorified fisherman-farmer-miner pressure group. It is no longer the party of capitalism; instead, almost all we hear from Mr. Stanfield are pleas for more aid to the Maritimes.

This is no way to appeal to the voters, and if National Headquarters doesn't know it, there is one body which does: the Progressive Conservative Student Federation (PCSF). This group has consistently taken stands on issues considerably to the right of the party's, and with the same consistency the party has sold them out in election after election. The party may pay lip service to free enterprise and individual responsibility, but the PCSF means it. The Tory

students have come to be something of an embarrassment to the party establishment. There is a conflict of goals here: the students can hold any view they please with impunity, while the politicians have to win elections. The idealists and the pragmatists lock horns again. However, since the pragmatic approach ("tell em anything") hasn't worked, maybe this time the idealists have a point.

One frequently hears political pundits remark that political parties must not be ideological; that they must solicit support from left and right; that a party should encompass all views - except those of "extremists"; that, in plain English, anything goes if it will get the party elected. If that is the case, what is the point in having political parties at all? If they don't stand for anything, if each party is indistinguishable from all the others, if their sole purpose is to funnel money into election contests at the riding level, then in the not-so-long run the parties will become an anachronisms, with Feuding "left" and "right" factions in each.

On the other hand, if there are basic principles underlying the structure of each party, to which principles do the Conservatives pay homage? Both the PC's and the Liberals are now parties of the "center", and in the last election we had the appalling spectacle of Stanfield trying to out-left Trudeau. But if the Conservatives default, then which party is the party of the right wing and capitalism? The Creditistes? The presen-

position of our three major national parties is off-balance: one is confidently on the left (winning esteem if not elections) while the other two cling to the middle of the road. This situation cannot continue much longer; it allows the NDP to masquerade as the wave of the future, which means that it will some day become one of the two major parties, while either the Grits or the Tories shuffle off to the oblivion in which dwells the British Liberal party.

To prevent this, the Conservatives will have to take a gamble and move right, praying that the polarization set in motion by themselves and the New Democrats will split the Liberals in half. The politicians will not do this, however, until the mood of the voters moves right (probably in reaction to a pull to the left). This is the cruel fact which the right-wingers in the PCSF cannot see. No matter how much the PCSF rants and raves, the Conservative party as a whole will not adopt their policies unless it is convinced that an election can be won on them. Thus the problem lies not with the rudderless party but with the bewildered electorate. The ideals of the right - individualism, rational patriotism, free enterprise - have to be sold to the people, a task that is part advertising, part education. It may not be such a hard job, either: if they'd buy a "just society" without reading the fine print, they'll buy anything.

by Lee Firth

Pelletier on draft and youth

By Elly Alboim

CUP bureau chief Elly Alboim interviewed Gerard Pelletier, Secretary of State, on Oct 29, the day after Pelletier spoke in Montreal about the youth draft and year-round school season proposals. The following is his report and the interview.

When you finish reading this, you'll probably wonder why he bothered with Pelletier. He went to interview him on the strength of his speech in Montreal, reasoning he had spoken out in reaction to student unrest and would have a fairly cogent analysis of what the government thought was wrong. He had supposed he would discuss the student in societal terms, offering alternative positions and proposals. There was little of that.

This interview though will give a fairly clear insight into what the government is doing, the sense of urgency it doesn't feel, and perhaps the way it will go about developing its proposals on youth.

CUP: Why do you think the media was so immediately responsive to your proposals on youth which were after all, only a small part of the speech and at best, vague, and hesitant thoughts?

PELLETIER: Well I don't know. I think there is in the population at large and probably in the press particularly a concern with the so-called student unrest and youth manifestations and the generation gap and all the rest of it and that anything concerning youth will attract ... interest.

A second reason probably is that I intentionally selected these ideas as sounding rather far-fetched ... (but deserving) closer study. I wanted to make the point that we wouldn't satisfy youth with a youth policy that would be just a continuation of the ordinary routine.

It was probably to a certain extent a deliberate attempt to shock people into realizing that a youth policy will have to consider solutions and measures that are not in the ordinary common field of government clichés.

CUP: What is your department doing in the youth "field" now?

PELLETIER: We are laying the grounds, doing our homework. After that, we want to consult with youth in quite an elaborate way, stating the problems as we see them and asking: "can you see them in the same light?" "What solutions do you have in mind? What do you think they are worth? How could they be applied?" We are really trying to start a process of study of the problems to come to a policy.

CUP: What would the consulting processes be? Who would you talk to and in what way?

PELLETIER: I think we would consult any representative group and personally I would go on to soundings and polls -- you know, go into it in the largest possible way.

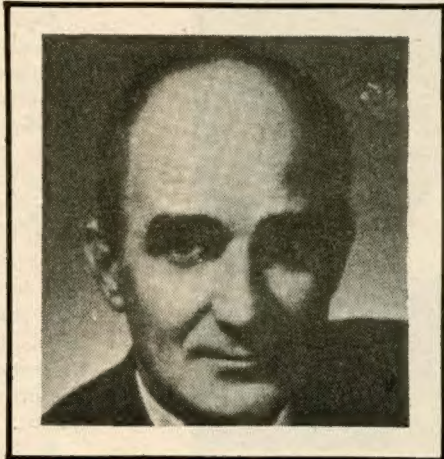
I said in the paper that when you talk about youth you tend to think about students only. But the larger part of youth is not students and they are working people and isolated. They are organized very little and it is difficult to get them into the labor movement ... there aren't enough representative organizations we could rely upon to know all their needs so I should think that we would approach this particular area of youth with all the means of discovering their needs and thoughts and aspirations.

CUP: The isolation, you feel, is the major problem. The civil draft, I assume is intended as an answer to that. But what about the CYC? How do you evaluate its role thus far and do you think an expanded CYC may be sufficient

for the youth involvement you'd like?

PELLETIER: That's right. This seems to be one of the major problems -- if you mean the decision-making processes, the governmental processes. As to the CYC, it's a form of youth involvement but a very particular one. It's a small affair -- I don't think it could be blown up into an organization that could solve all problems.

The CYC has gone through various crisis over the last three years ever since it was created. I think most of those problems were administrative and that much has been done now to bring it back on the tracks. It's doing some very good work in some areas and within a year or two it might be a very valid organization. It will certainly create furor here and there because its kind of work, social animation, cannot take place without people in power feeling disturbed -- I don't think this can or should be avoided. I think it's quite novel. I am not advocating a CYC that would be subversive, but the very nature of their approach to problems, helping people who have no voice to express themselves and initiate some action is certainly by its very nature creating unrest or surprise or even shock in some points and it will always be that way.



CUP: But subversion is a very relative term. Perhaps we are not talking about the violent overthrow of government, but if we are talking about a radical transformation of the established order, as many students are now proposing, we run into what many entrenched people call "subversion". How will you be able to reconcile the CYC's work and indeed the work of anyone in the proposed civil service with the fear many people have in regards to student action? After all, the only satisfying work that students will indulge in will be of radical action, trying to overthrow the established order of Canadian government, perhaps not in a violent sense but certainly in a radical reformist sense. Will the taxpayer pay for action he fears? Surely that is what has been plaguing the CYC.

PELLETIER: I take for granted that in the field of reform, of radical change, there are objectives, constructive ones, that can be placed beyond the generation gap or the differences between students and the adult world and I think that these are the areas where there can be common action. Whether it would eventually bring radical changes and shifts in society, we cannot know in advance, but I am not afraid of that. I think that we need radical changes in our society. I think we need reform in our society and the only problem is to carry them out without violence. I don't think we need violence in our context...

I think there is enough in common between what the government wants to achieve and what youth can realistically expect to achieve so that we can work together. If this hypothesis is not valid, I would say that society can't go on; there would be on way of reconciling the two groups and we'd have civil war.

CUP: Students at university are now worried about a co-opting process that absorbs dissidents into tokenistic positions of responsibility. How, getting back to my earlier point, would you allow them a sufficient freedom of action to satisfy them and the taxpayer at the same time?

PELLETIER: I think that any individual at a certain point in his life has to come to terms with reality. He'll do it in a conservative way or a reformist way or a revolutionary way but what he wants to achieve is always less than what he will achieve. What you would like to do is always different from what you will be placed in a position to do. That's what I call coming to terms with reality. It is from those positions of reality that we must act.

I think there is a spectrum of youth opinion that resembles the spectrum of opinion you will find in the general population except that you might find a higher degree of radicalism in youth, and so much the better if it were not we would be headed for a very dull future. But I believe strongly myself in the possibility of acting together no matter what kind of radicalism exists in youth because there is enough of a common denominator in society, which includes youth, so that you can work out. As I said before, if this didn't exist it would mean the country, the society no longer exists and you'll have civil war.

You must deal with a democratic process, otherwise it's the rule of force and we are not ready for that. I don't think for a moment that youth, and not the students in particular, would want to say "we entrench ourselves away from society and we conduct an operation that has nothing to do with the rest of the country and we don't want to talk, we don't want to discuss, we don't want to come to terms with anyone". I don't think this is the road we are on.

CUP: Perhaps I've misunderstood your basic orientation. I've the impression that the press regards your statements as an expression of concern with student unrest which after all has been led by a small vanguard of students and that you were trying to deal in some way with this dissident group.

PELLETIER: I am very deeply concerned with any minority group. I think I made it very clear that if we are to have a youth policy it will have to be audacious and daring otherwise it couldn't exist because this is the mood of youth in 1968. Many of the proposals put before me were not as far-fetched or irresponsible as they sounded and I took two of the most extreme ones to show that even these must be studied.

Now I realize full well what this peaceful conscription would mean, let's just see the problem with the labor movement. I've been with them for twelve years and I know what their reaction will be: "You're just getting cheap labor!" It's a tremendous problem but what we're trying to do is to try and not close our minds to any of the possibilities for a move forward and a chance for youth to express itself and do what it wants to do.

CUP: Have you any specific proposals you would like to see implemented?

PELLETIER: Oh! There are numbers of them, only to recite them would be a little long for this interview. But I wouldn't do it for another reason because I believe the proposals that are the most interesting come from youth itself. Adults must realize that youth has a much more acute sense of the future that we do which means I wouldn't trust myself or any government to find better objectives or be more attuned to the future than youth.

CUP: The 12 month proposal -- was that off the top of your head or was that studied as well?

PELLETIER: Well, this is a provincial jurisdiction and a student proposal and I gave it only as an example and may be I shouldn't have because I'll probably get complaints that "Federal people are talking about provincial matters" but I personally find it so reasonable that I used it as an example here and because there are so many adults who would consider it unreasonable just because they never considered it.

In an automated society, students are discovering and we are discovering too in trying to create summer jobs for them that there are fewer and fewer jobs for them to obtain. Who is going to support the 80% of students or more whose parents cannot afford to send them to university? It's perfectly normal for the government to support students while they're studying but if the government is going to support 80% of the university students for doing nothing during the four summer months, I think it's preposterous.

CUP: What about free education at the post-secondary level?

PELLETIER: Well, that's a provincial matter again. I'm personally as a citizen, favorable to it as soon as it can come but let's go a step further and decide that the university student is a worker and should be paid a salary. You won't be paid a salary for four months, holiday because all the other groups in society would say: "Why the hell they and not us?" I just used this as an example because it seems so obvious to me that we're heading for that kind of solution.

CUP: Would you specify a date for publication of your department's proposals?

PELLETIER: It's very difficult to articulate these things. We've had someone doing preliminary work for months now and we are expecting a report from him soon. We then have to go into the process of consultation though how we will do that hasn't been decided. We will at least require mobile committees to go to the people or we can call youth spokesmen before a standing committee of the house. I personally favor the former. Then we would have to produce a white paper, if there was to be major legislation...

CUP: Then it's a couple of years. **PELLETIER:** Yes, at least.

CUP: When will students hear about preliminary positions and a call for consultation?

PELLETIER: I'd say within three or four months. One more thing ... The speech in Montreal was really a declaration of intention rather than set policy ... it's the role of a minister to air ideas of this kind of determine civil reaction ... it was really more a form of gauging public opinion than formulated policy.

In London...Farewell



On Sunday, October 27th, the main thoroughfares of central London were brought to a standstill. Fleet Street, the Strand, and Whitehall were flooded with torrents of human bodies, at times galloping forward, and at others, marching regularly with rhythmic pace. Past Australia House, Trafalgar Square, Downing Street, and the Foreign Ministry, the crowds chanted their slogans and engulfed the streets.

Visiting French students sang the Internationale, red flags fluttered in the breeze, forests of placards bobbed up and down in colourful profusion, and the clamour of clapping hands and passionate cries of protest echoed from the stately buildings on all sides, their windows staring blankly back in the capital's largely abandoned West End. Seven thousand policemen stood ready nearby and strings of them lined the sidewalks, protecting important points. To a stranger, unfamiliar with its background, it might all have seemed like just another noisy demonstration.

Britain, however, had been bracing for it since the end of September. Posters had advertised its time and place. Faithful committee workers sold pamphlets and distributed leaflets at streetcorners. The national dailies covered its gradual organization and interviewed the young Pakistani behind it. The timing seemed ideal, since on the eve of an American election whose candidates had largely ignored the issue, Vietnam deserved renewed attention. The chain reaction a London march might provoke around the world was promising. But as the days succeeded each other, a state of mind verging upon national hysteria swelled up across the country and tactical fights erupted in student ranks, to ensure that more would be at stake in the upcoming event than the fortunes of a tiny oppressed people in the Far East.

It all probably had its beginning in the mind of a single man. An improbable militant whose background might raise the eyebrows of a textbook proletarian, Tariq Ali only earned international attention in the early summer when he welcomed the French revolutionary Daniel Cohn-Bendit to England for a short stay. Before that however he had attracted the devotion of the British student Left as a colourful, convincing exponent of sweeping reform. Enormously wealthy in his own right and a former Oxford student, he is editor of the progressive organ **The Black Dwarf** and founder of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign.

On the first Sunday of term, he spoke to 1500 freshmen at the famous Oxford Union, the debating society building in which aspiring prime ministers and statesmen have flaunted their talents for over a hundred years. In the room where Gladstone proved his speaking abilities as an undergraduate in the 1830's, and over which Ali himself had presided as head of the Union a few years before, he denounced the failure of the Wilson government to dissociate itself from American actions in Vietnam and skillfully traced the manner in which the hopes of reformists had withered under four years of Labour rule.



To a listener previously unacquainted with the man, his moderate vocabulary and well-reasoned arguments were a refreshing contrast to the doctrinaire ramblings of the meeting's organizers, the Oxford Revolutionary Socialist Students. Ali's militancy was unmistakable, yet the winning manner in which he voiced it silenced even those Tory hecklers who had come to disrupt the meeting. The October demonstration should be orderly and disciplined, he insisted, and stewards were to be employed to encourage restraint among the marchers. Confrontations with the police would be unnecessary and self-defeating.

It soon became obvious that the reasoned tones of Tariq Ali were not to remain unchallenged. National dailies like **The Guardian** and **The Times** claimed to have unearthed blueprints for guerrilla-type activity in the streets, and rumours of arsenals of weapons stored away for the demonstrators' use were the order of the day. Indeed there were voices being raised in favour of violence from all sides. The resulting array of fronts and organizations claiming leadership of the march and churning out of the details of its projected course began to boggle the mind, and must have sorely distressed the ideologically uncommitted student who just quite simply opposed the war. An Anti-Imperialist Solidarity movement burst to life to rival Tariq Ali's organization. The Young Communist League steered an independent course. Marxist and socialist clubs, not to mention Labour and Liberal parties, divided in every direction across the country, and the debate at the committee level as well as among the leaders raged furiously.

Ali's Vietnam Solidarity Campaign had decided to avoid the American Embassy altogether, since an earlier protest in March had resulted in bloody battles with the police and alienated public support. Tactically speaking as well, even if the principle



of confrontation were to be admitted, Grosvenor Square, where the U.S. mission is situated, was unfavourable ground for a pitched fight since demonstration had been easily boxed in last time by clever police movements. Instead, it was reasonably argued, the march should terminate at Hyde Park with a rally far away from the Embassy and the temptations to violence which it represented.

Rival organizations did not agree. The Anti-Imperialists interpreted the March massacre as "a spontaneous demonstration of militant solidarity with Vietnam such as shook the security of the U.S. Embassy and threw down the first militant challenge in decades to the British state itself." Traitors to the true cause like Tariq Ali, "that international adventurer and playboy of the pseudo-left", were purely interested in replacing the present Labour party with yet another "reformist party of deceit" and hungered for the political limelight so as to earn their talents an audience and guarantee themselves a position in "the minor management sub-committees of capitalism." More stinging words among compatriots of the Left could hardly be imagined.

A disaffected member of the V.S.C. complained that in his experience at the upper levels of organization, the shallowness of the leaders, commitment to revolution was such that he feared they favoured it only as long as it occurred abroad and did not intrude upon their own preferred complacency at home. Furthermore, conventional, respectable channels appeared to be the consciously-chosen quagmire into which the bankrupt movement's leaders, most prominently Tariq Ali himself, were deceptively leading their erstwhile militant disciples. Meanwhile, self-styled Maoists rejected sophistry and shop-talk and openly demanded pitched battles with the police to render the contradictions of the Hegelian dialectic incarnate.

But if Tariq Ali was correct about the volatility of police and protesters alike in the vicinity of the U.S. Embassy, his extremist opponents had posed another question — namely, how convinced and fertile was the ideology which he and his peaceful followers were prepared to defend. In a Britain adjacent to a French society where in May and June even previously vociferous leftist groups, especially the Communist Party itself, had betrayed the cause of their countrymen at the hour of crisis, and in a daily more depressing political scene featuring awaiting victory in the wings, and the spectre of racist and simplistic politics in the person of the popular Enoch Powell portending evils of another sort, it is understandable that a growing portion of British youth should be both eager to inspire a wind of change and idealism in the public arena and suspicious of fifth-column activity in their own ranks.

Apart, too, from the question of Ali's plausibility as a socialist revolutionary, the extremists had reason to doubt the forcefulness of peaceful measures in the concluding months of a year which had seemed to deal a final blow to the hopes and tactics of less impassioned or reckless exponents of chan-

To Peaceful Protest



ge. The deaths of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, both of whom in their own ways had be-
rated social division as well as irrational respon-
ses to injustice outside the traditional political
process, had shaken even the most moderate man's
trust in the ultimate sensitivity of the public to
current social sores. The retreat to an almost ana-
chronistic style of politics in America, with faces
from the distant past replacing the freshness and
valour of a Eugene McCarthy, must have deeply
disturbed more members of the younger generations
than the present writer alone.

And then, too, the utter failure of passive and
dignified resistance in Czechoslovakia to send the
Russian tanks and detachments scurrying home
could hardly bolster the "already fading credit of
moderate, disciplined reactions to oppression. It is
thus a totally bewildered youth which today scans
the meaning of world events. Over four years of
passionate opposition in the streets, as well as in
the lecture-halls, have failed to budge the State
Department from its stubborn Asian course, and
allied governments around the world have met the
recurrent pleas of their countrymen for peace with
profound and callous silence.

It is not surprising that it is "Victory for the
NLF" rather than "Peace through Negotiations"
which is now the movement's masor theme. There
is a certain hollow ring to pacifism in an age when
even theologians are rationalizing the use of force.
And the well-publicized manner in which worldwide
extremists, not only in America, but also in Ger-
many and Mexico and France, have masterminded
states of national emergency is a shining example
for leaders of similar views elsewhere to invoke in
their own surroundings. The question the student
extremist asks in the Britain of autumn, 1968 is
how determined are figures of present prominence
to extend their belief in foreign revolution to the

home frontier; and the just resolve and effective
retort of moderates like Tariq Ali is to illustrate
persuasively that militancy is not to be measured
in bloodshed or public destruction. In the days im-
mediately preceding the march, it remained to be
seen which opinion was to be lastingly vindicated.

For all the feuds and the fragmentation which
they were inducing at this point, however, every
group and organization desired a common fervour
behind the cause --- whatever, in addition to Viet-
nam, that happened to be --- so that even the
splinter breakaway parties paid homage to unity
and solidarity. But the divisions, sad to relate,
were too pervasive to cure with pious, short-lived
intentions.

At meetings of local **ad hoc** committess across
the nation militants of countless stripes harangued
the party faithful about their own suggested tactics,
condemned the Trotskism of Ali or praised his
abiding realism, promoted violence or argued the
forcefulness of peaceful protest, suggested a detour
from the march route to Grosvenor Square or ar-
gued the dispensability of the American embassy as
a principal target.

In the week immediately prior to the demonstra-
tion, London School of Economics students occupied
their buildings and prepared medical aid centres to
assist the wounded. Tariq Ali promised at a press
conference a disciplined, non-violent march. The
newspapers quoted dissenting minority leaders bent
upon bloodshed and vandalism. Principal buildings
along the projected route had their windows board-
ed up. On the eve of the demonstration, police an-
nouncements urged parents to keep their teenaged
children away from danger in the West End, and
reserve detachments of bobbies were summoned to
duty. The hysteria was reaching its peak.

On Friday, October 25th, James Callaghan, the
Home Secretary, in answer to questions in the
Commons, admitted there was a risk in permitting
the march to proceed as planned, but he feared
even more the effects of an official ban. Foreign
students were warned they would be denied entry
into the country if they were known to be making
for London. Buses carrying groups of students to
the capital were searched for weapons. And the
press awaited with growing impatience the eruption
of widespread hooliganism and vicious battles in
the streets.

But up to 100,000 marchers proved the nation
wrong. In orderly, effective ranks they proceeded
along the announced route as planned and avoided
showdowns with the police. After four hours on
foot, the demonstrators were told by an elated Ta-
riq Ali that an overwhelming majority had earned
respect and attention for the cause. A couple of
thousand defectors were at the moment battling

police at the American mission, but their effect
on the total picture in all justice should be very
feeble indeed. A telegram of gratitude from the
National Liberation Front was read to the million
thousands, and the crowds dispersed, quietly and
pleased, as darkness fell upon London.

The newspapers the next day, however, splashed
photographs of protesters kicking policemen in the
face across their front pages. Headlines allowed
that a good number --- underestimated at "perhaps
30,000" --- and the majority of marchers had been
non-violent, but, as **The Guardian** put it, they had
seemed to lack "the raw edge of conviction." The
"Maoists and anarchists", loose terms for the vio-
lent which the media used, received maximum pu-
blicity.

Perhaps it was fair that along Fleet Street on
Sunday, the loudest chorus of denunciation was re-
served for papers like the **Daily Telegraph** and
the **Daily Express** whose buildings flanked the rou-
te. In predicting scenes of violence and placing a
bloodthirsty premium in advance upon confronta-
tions with the police, the national press had made
the efforts of moderates like Tariq Ali very diffi-
cult indeed. It may have been as much a trick
played upon "the organs of the bourgeoisie" as it
was their genuine desire, for the protesters to hold
themselves voluntarily in rein.

Next time around the disillusioned members of
the peaceful parade might with more than a little
justification hop upon the bandwagon which expecta-
tions in official circles had constructed, and bask
in the spotlight so generously awarded the apostles
of unreason and desperation. For in the end, many
of the mass media, like the American government
itself through its rigidity, have disastrously upped
the stakes of protest by their attitudes ensuring
that remembrance will be reserved for the violent
and oblivion is all that the peaceful can hope to win.
Somehow the loose ends of the movement had held
together for the time being, drawn together no
doubt by the strength of numbers which unity on the
Vietnam issue represented at the moment. But
recriminations and regretful grumblings, so wi-
despread among a significant segment of the rank
and file barely minutes after dispersal in Hyde
Park, foretold less fortuitous developments in the
near future.

Tariq Ali may have been justified when he said
at the closing rally that what had just succeeded
was the greatest non-violent Vietnam protest ever
organized in the Western world. But sadly enough,
with the social conscience of Western society as
blunted as it seems today and the restless expo-
nents of thorough re-appraisal confused and divided
among themselves, it may very well be the last.

by Bob Calderisi

Bob Calderisi is a graduate of Loyola currently
studying at Oxford on a Rhodes scholarship.

A Profile of American Racism



illusions comes to an end. Increasing numbers of the oppressed group compare their relatively unchanged status with the long string of promises and progressive rhetoric. With this contrast clearly in mind, they rise up to challenge the fundamental legitimacy of those structures which provide liberals with power. The result is an increased polarization in society. Most liberals then cast off the progressive facade in order to defend themselves from serious threats to that "law and order" which gave them their original strength. In so doing, they ally themselves openly with those whom yesterday they denounced as "irresponsible racists, warmongers, witchhunters" and the like. During the same period, those of the oppressed group, plus a minority of liberals now finally disowning their past links with the politics of self-serving idealism, identify the oppressor clearly for the first time. This stage, in turn, shifts into a period of vast upheaval -- commonly involving the threat or actual use of violence by both sides. The logical result is a new society defined by either elimination of the insurgent group, a much greater state of oppression and mutual hostility than existed before, or a new power relationship favorable to significant progress for those previously kept down.

Turning to the particular story of race relations in the United States, the above pattern seems verified both historically and in the current period. Among traditional liberal heroes of the American presidency, Jefferson himself was a slaveholder and backed down from the idea of denouncing slavery in the Declaration of Independence; Lincoln reluctantly emancipated Southern slaves (though not those living in border states siding with the Union) as merely a tactic to hurt the enemy; Wilson introduced segregation of facilities in government offices in Washington, D.C.; and Franklin Roosevelt consistently upheld his alliance with explicitly racist Southern members of Congress at the expense of blacks from both South and North. If these are the "progressive" Presidents of the past, little wonder that current black militants regard traditional American liberalism as a fraud against their people.

By the mid-1950's, Afro-Americans had experienced conscription into three major wars "to save the world for democracy" and large-scale economic impoverishment in times both of depression and "prosperity." Large numbers had migrated to Northern cities only to meet disillusioning de facto segregation of more subtle varieties. Blacks also felt the stinging contrast between American foreign policy support of independence movements in Africa and Asia and governmental hostility to their own efforts to gain greater liberation in the United States. None of these experiences were the product simply of Wallace-type explicit white racism. Each arose directly out of the mainstream of American policy. Each experience coldly reminded them of the basic hypocrisy of that "liberal mainstream" characterizing American society from 1776 to the present. White America took pride in its "progressive" ideals, its nominal commitment to equal opportunity for all, as well as its general prosperity. American blacks, however, knew that an unwritten clause stating "niggers excluded" was included in each of these promises. America's original "social contract" (the Constitution) revealed openly the racist historical roots of the republic. Despite immense reliance on blacks as contributors to economic development, culture, and white self-esteem, America never disavowed that origin. Blacks could be used, but never accepted as equals.

In the late 1950's began a new phase of Afro-American militancy. Attacks were concentrated on the most vulnerable and exposed areas of white racism, those aspects of public discrimination (such as segregated facilities in transportation, restaurants, and motels, as well as obstacles against voting registration -- all primarily in the South) from which white liberals could disassociate with the least difficulty, the least cost to themselves. Even here, however, concessions came only after immense dramatic challenges to the status quo by such organizations as C.O.R.E., S.N.C.C., and the S.C.L.C. of Martin Luther King. Who can forget the many marches, sit-ins, freedom

Those who attended the recent lecture by Dean Hovde of Columbia University received a taste of that standard response which American liberalism offers to every current day crisis. To begin with, he sought to identify himself as a **radical innovator** by claiming similar concerns with those who last Spring dared to confront the university with a serious critique of its "domestic" and "external" operations. Predictably, he then both **denounced the "violent" tactics** employed by those demanding immediate response to their critique and **paternalistically dismissed** certain student objectives as "irresponsible." In sum, he suggested that with deep grievances finally (although "tragically") brought to the surface, the campus was achieving a new level of sweet reasonableness from which smooth and satisfactory progress would inevitably follow. Unmentioned were the facts that despite a new veneer, Columbia's actual decision-making structure remains still aloof from significant influence by the students, relations with the outside society (from Harlem to the Pentagon) are essentially unaltered, and leaders of the Spring demonstrations still confront serious charges in the courts. This type of manipulation and self-deception concerning the issues of a fundamental social crisis is hardly new. American liberals have responded in the same fashion to crises of economic depression, the Vietnam war, and racial discontent. (Is Canadian liberalism any different?)

The point of this is to help clarify the nature of the leading actor, next to the black man himself, in America's contemporary race crisis. In plain terms, it is the liberal, not the follower of George Wallace, who is the primary obstacle to significant

improvement in the black man's condition. Liberals in the United States have held sufficient political, economic, and intellectual resources over the last four decades for vast alterations in American race relations potentially to have occurred. The key missing element was precisely a strong motivation to use such resources. It is this pivotal role, still occupied by American liberals, which reveals far better than the Wallace phenomenon the dynamic factors behind racism in the United States today.

As a general rule, that concern which most dominates the thinking of liberals facing social crisis is "how best do I save my own skin in the immediate future?" The greater sophistication, the further into the future such calculations are projected. The primary motivation is to grant whatever concessions seem likely to conserve one's own base of power. **Secondarily**, liberals hope that such concessions are also in the direction of what they define as progressive ideals. Rhetorical idealism, however, is much easier to employ for distant contexts rather than for those of the liberal's own backyard. (Are Canadian liberals not "shocked" and "concerned" with conditions in Biafra or American ghettos, while stubbornly aloof from the seething frustration among Canada's Indians, French minority, or poverty sector -- the latter "officially" 40% of Montreal's population?) When challenged by an oppressed group on his own home grounds, the liberal tends to react in one of two ways. Either he moves directly to simple repression or he charts a slow tactical retreat, often with clever traps set by which to snare insurgents in the illusion of fundamental change. Sooner or later, the time of reformist



rides, boycotts, and registration campaigns courageously carried out in the heartland of explicit white racism? Who dares ignore that whatever the gains achieved, these were only at the expense of numerous jailings, beatings, bombings, and murders? Only then would white liberals consent to federal legislation (however limited the effect in actual application) guaranteeing for Southern blacks certain elemental aspects of human dignity made available to whites for one and a half centuries. We should also remember that it took apparently the assassination of a young liberal President to finally prod Congress into passing the most important of the civil rights laws, in 1964.

Having renewed confidence in its strength through campaigns in the South, by the early 1960's the black movement began shifting attention to basic problems of black ghettos throughout the entire country. It is this phase, of course, that we still observe. No contrasts are more startling than between the 1963 March on Washington and the endless series of urban riots beginning in Harlem the following year; between Martin Luther King and Malcolm X or Eldridge Cleaver; between gospel singing in small Southern churchhouses and sniper fire, Molotov cocktails, and the clenched fist salute in the North. Despite the fact that both phases of black militancy are part of the same fundamental quest for decent human existence, in the latter phase liberal America draws the line. Lyndon Johnson expressed it on numerous occasions: "A rioter with a molotov cocktail in his hands is not fighting for civil rights any more than a Klansman with a sheet on his back and a mask on his face. They are both more or less what the law declares them to be: law breakers, destroyers of constitutional rights, and liberties, and ultimately destroyers of free America. They must be exposed and they must be dealt with."

In each important area of basic living conditions for urban blacks, the situation is deteriorating either in absolute terms or relative to the rate of improvement for whites. In effect, physical and psychological violence is **already** committed by white-dominated society against blacks through police brutality, massive un- and under-employment rates, deteriorating housing, humiliating welfare programs, and inadequate and repressive educational systems. As Kenneth Clark, a prominent black sociologist, observed to the President's Riot Commission in 1967, white awareness of these conditions is not new. Similar evidence appeared

in reports of earlier American commissions investigating riots in 1919, 1935, 1943, and 1965. Reports, no matter how damning, are apparently only flimsy sheets of paper, to be cast away as soon as tactfully possible. Is it surprising, therefore, that large segments of the black population are convinced that only counter-violence will shock whites into some form of meaningful response?

What is challenged is the entire economic-social-political order with which whites structure present-day society. Massive governmental financial assistance (estimated by an earlier Presidential commission as at least ten times the present annual rate) is essential to begin to significantly transform conditions in the ghetto. To launch such a program, in turn, demands political behavior presently quite alien to the existing majority of politicians from city leaders to the Presidency. To shove politicians forward in the absence of positive convictions of their own requires an alert, progressive white population finally purged of its long racist heritage. As the latest riot commission clearly stated, however, none of these necessary trends has yet appeared. Instead, in 1968, white America presents the sick spectacles of a Humphrey-Nixon-Wallace ticket stressing return to "law and order," of a Congress taking pride in a "civil rights" package including prosecution of "those who cross state lines with the intent of inciting riots," and of continued public spending of \$30 billion on the bloody Vietnam fiasco without promise of a significant defense spending decrease even after the war. In a genuine sense, the August Democratic convention in Chicago revealed quite accurately the present course of American liberalism. Mayor Daly personifies its base of power. According to the normal self-serving short-range calculations of liberal leaders, it obviously was safer to rely on those constituencies presently moving increasingly toward explicit repressive mentalities. The major alternative was a new base composed of non-white groups, poor people in general, and those middle-class elements to some degree radicalized by the Vietnam experience. A third (somewhat overlapping with the second) significant constituency base was apparently in the meantime lost to the Wallace movement. This group of newcomers to the middle class, white trade unionists, and poor Appalachian residents clearly held a progressive potential of their own if existing American liberal leadership had refused to feed

them into a demagogic racist "alternative." Who can deny the potential of such whites when they respond so enthusiastically to the theme of "bureaucratic manipulation from Washington," to attacks on hypocritical liberal "integrationist" advocates who send their own kids to private white schools, and so on?

The present tendency of many black leaders to stress "black capitalist" directions for the "black power" movement is only indicative of the desperation of their people. The logic here seems similar to that motivating many ghetto black youth to regard military service in Vietnam as a path of upward mobility. As presently formulated, black capitalist development of ghettos hardly appears to offer significant gains for the majority of that population. Indeed, such schemes suggest the likelihood of far more subtle and effective means of perpetuating the blacks' subordinate role within the overall economic framework of American society. The experience of new nations throughout the Third World is ample warning against the dangers of such a program. In the end, of course, it is for blacks themselves to decide exactly which immediate and long-range goals they intend to emphasize the most.

In my own view, the prospect for significant black gains over the next decade or two is quite bleak. No matter which candidate wins in this week's election, the "old politics" will prevail. Either the "moderate conservatism" of Nixon or the "traditional liberalism" of Humphrey will be able to arrange a peace accord in Vietnam. But this fails to require that drastic re-appraisal of America's relations with the Third World necessary to avoid similar catastrophes in the future. An end to the war also does not mean, as commonly assumed, that billions of dollars will automatically become available for spending in the ghettos. What a peace accord does seem to suggest, however, is that an already conservative Congress will refuse to make any "additional policy concessions" in a liberal direction. In addition to the withholding of meaningful sums from the ghettos, chances seem good for a new, more intense, "anti-subversive" witchhunt. Attacking both those who "undermined and sold out the United States" in Vietnam and "professional agitators" in the ghettos, the effect will be to intensify the existing sense of frustration, to push Americans further into the repressive mentality, and to eliminate many of the progressive forces currently present in the political scene. Quite obviously, this would simply encourage even greater manifestations of violence and the rise of a new generation of militant leaders. This self-perpetuating cycle, in turn, increases all the more the potential for assumption of power by a Wallace-type movement in 1972 and beyond. At that point, of course, alternatives would be drastically reduced. A separate black nation in the South, as already proposed by some, would then appear as virtually the only alternative short of South African or Nazi German "solutions."

Progressive Americans must certainly **hope** that enough already-powerful liberals will keep the political framework flexible enough to lead soon to drastic positive transformations of American society without recourse to violence. Most evidence to the present, however, suggests that the blind self-righteousness characterizing American liberalism will only continue. No easy solution remains, to the contrary of the situation in Vietnam. Whites cannot simply sign a treaty with Afro-Americans, withdraw themselves from any contact, and write it all off as a bad dream. It may well be as Frantz Fanon suggests, that Western culture is burdened with a fundamental need to dominate others, to desperately and continually "prove" white superiority. At the least, American politics must be drastically remolded, American liberalism cast off in exchange for genuinely progressive alternatives. In this situation, it is eminently logical by the sheer instinct of self-survival, as the Black Panthers currently suggest, that blacks get guns and develop the will to use them if necessary. In the meantime, American whites owe a tremendous debt to blacks for finally showing us who we are, what our American liberal ideology has been all about, and what possible alternatives may still exist for throwing off that long heritage of domineering patterns before we push them to their logical destructive ends both at home and abroad.

by Dr. D. Porter

Atwater Market of Montreal.....



Best cauliflower and rabbit in town

Photos by: John Meuris

Ben Blommestein